

Section 2

Introduction

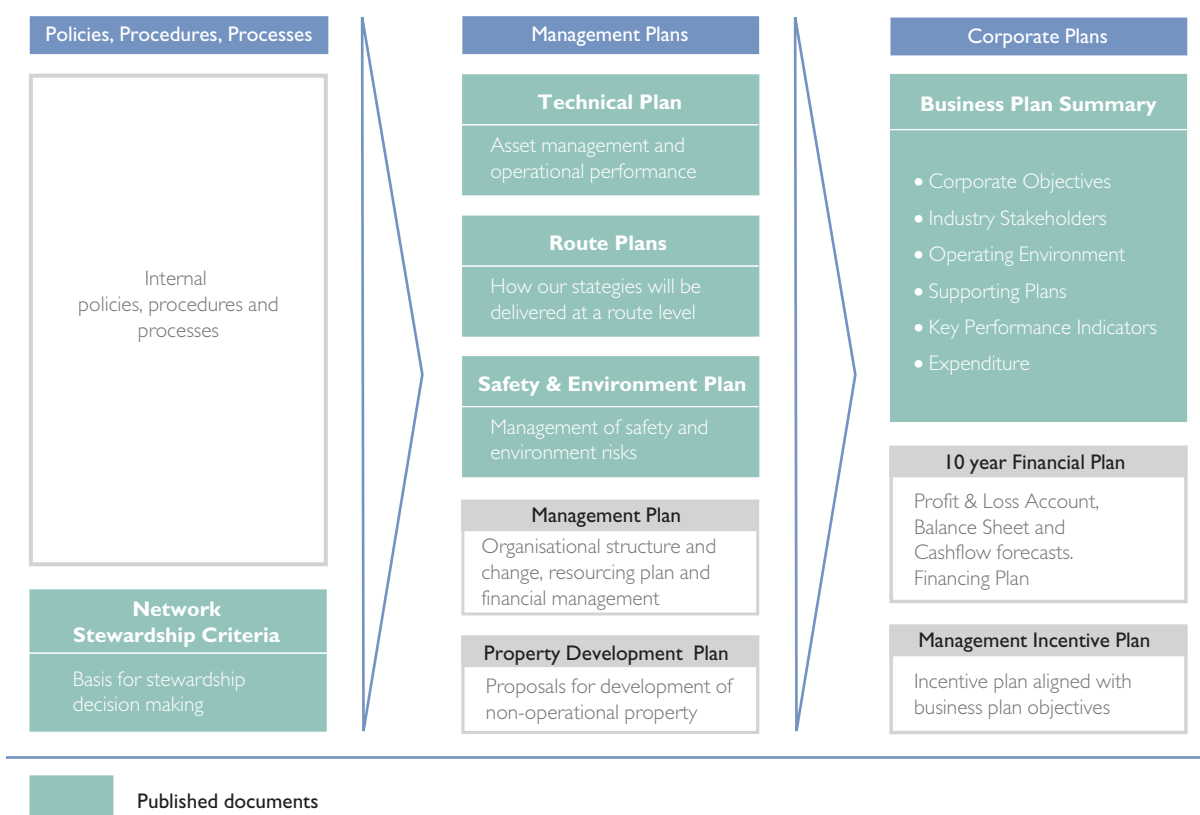
The purpose of the Technical Plan

Our mission is to operate a safe, reliable and efficient rail infrastructure. We are the provider of a key service in an industry upon which millions of people depend every day for work or pleasure. It is appropriate therefore, that customers, funders and the travelling public understand how we intend to deliver this objective in an efficient and effective manner. The 2004 Technical Plan describes how we intend to achieve our vision of engineering and operational excellence in the delivery of our network stewardship obligations at a national, network-wide level, and specifically:

- how we ensure the safe and efficient day-to-day operation of the rail network;
- how and when we carry out maintenance and renewal of the network;
- how we are seeking to balance the demand for access to the network to carry out this work with the needs of our customers to run train services; and
- how we integrate our work programme with enhancement initiatives designed to develop the network.

These plans are disaggregated to the 26 Strategic Routes in the Route Plans document. This Technical Plan forms part of a comprehensive suite of documents that contain details of our plans, policies and processes, as shown below. Together with the Business Plan Summary, Financial Plan and the Network Stewardship Criteria it fulfils the relevant requirements of Condition 7 of our network licence.

Figure 2.1 Business plan suite of documents



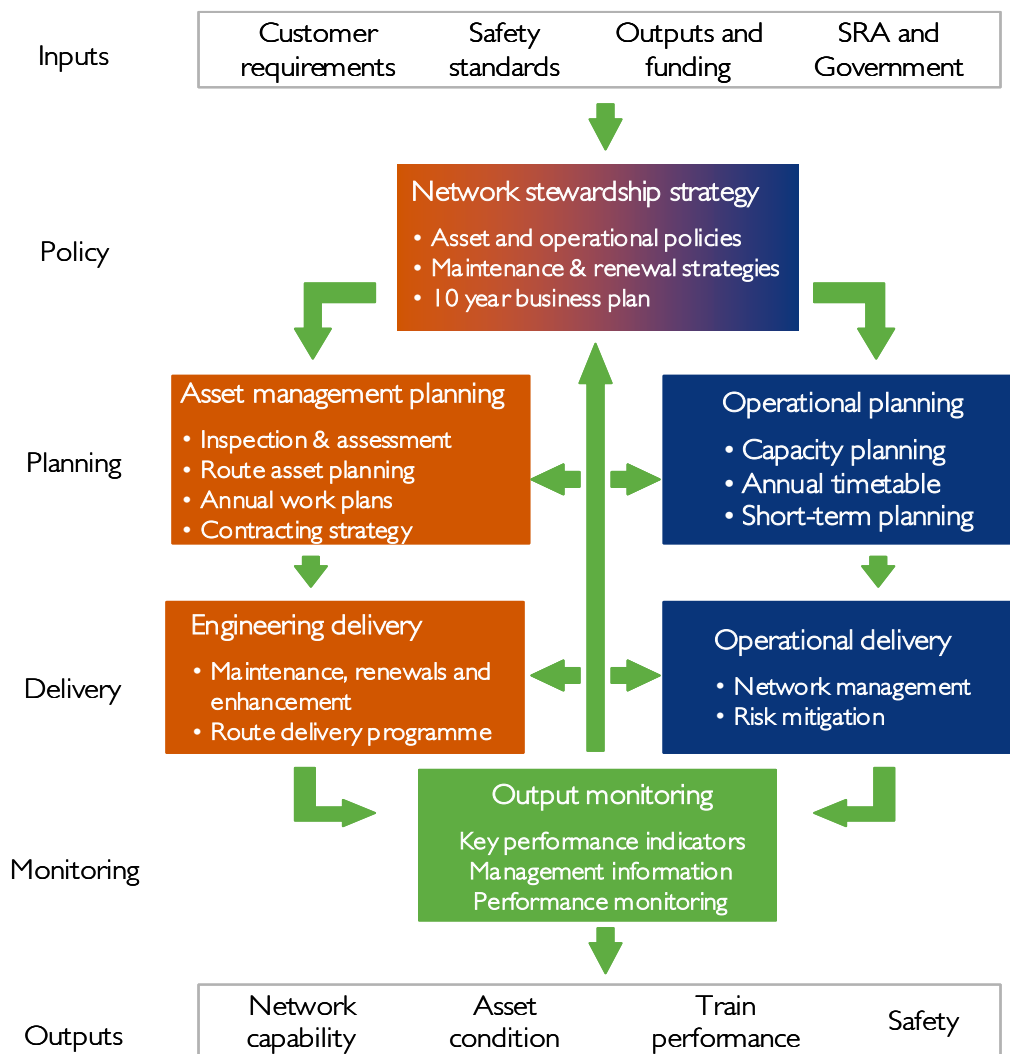
Introduction

This is our second Technical Plan since acquiring Railtrack in the autumn of 2002. Last year we pointed out the scale of the challenge and that, given the recent transfer out of administration, our plans could not be considered complete. Rather they reflected a transition from the old to the new. Considerable progress has been made over the previous 12 months and our plans continue to evolve.

The process model we defined last year, see below, continues to provide a robust framework to develop our vision for business improvement. Our improved understanding of these processes and their interdependencies has been valuable in designing the new organisational structure and ensuring that individual initiatives are properly aligned.

Our improvement programme remains based upon achieving excellence in these core processes.

Figure 2.2 Key business processes



Document structure

We have structured this Technical Plan around our six core processes. In the following sections we explain the primary purpose of each process, the basis upon which it has contributed to our 2004 Business Plan and details of our plans to improve the process and its application.

Section 3: Network stewardship strategy

The production of our ten-year plan and the asset management and operational policies that support the delivery of this plan. This is based on a comprehensive understanding of what our customers, funders and other key industry partners expect from the rail network

Section 4: Asset management planning

The application of our asset management policies to produce work plans, generally for the next three years. These plans take account of any enhancement initiatives, including those agreed with the SRA.

Section 5: Engineering delivery

The safe and economical delivery of the workbanks identified by asset management planning, optimising availability of network access and supplier resources.

Section 6: Operational planning

The production of a robust and deliverable timetable that reflects the actual capability of the network.

Section 7: Operational delivery

How we ensure the safe and reliable delivery of the timetable.

Section 8: Output monitoring

The development of a monitoring and analysis regime that enables us to track the delivery of our plans.

Section 9: Plans by asset types

For clarity the specific plans for each of the asset disciplines are contained within this separate section.

Section 10: Operational performance

We have developed a comprehensive series of action plans to address the current unacceptable level of train performance. We have prepared a commentary on this recovery plan, bringing together the various initiatives and actions plans in this section.

Section 11: Network capability

A map is provided of the network identifying its capability in terms of: line speed, loading gauge, axle load, electrification and capacity utilisation (i.e. its capability to carry additional traffic).

Section 12: Glossary

A glossary of terms used within the document.